priority for any candidate of any discipline is contemplated in the scheme of the Engineering Service Examination and Civil Services Examination.

Mining projects in Rajasthan and Punjab

*349. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any new mining projects have been undertaken in Rajasthan and Punjab;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government have made any new surveys to find new Minerals in the State of Rajasthan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL AND MINES (DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO): (a) and (b) As per the new National Mineral Policy, 1993 non-fuel and non-atomic mineral sector has been thrown open to private sector for investment. The Mineral Concessions for new mineral projects are granted by the respective State Governments. Only in case of scheduled minerals as specified in Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957 prior approval of Central Government is taken before granting any Mineral Concession by the State Government. List of minerals is given in the enclosed statement *(See* below).

In Rajasthan during the last three years, 105 mining leases have been granted by the State Government in an area of 2635.46 Hectares. Central Government has given prior permission for grant of 22 Mining Leases, 6 Prospecting Licenses and 30 Reconnaisance Permits during the last three years. Hindustan Zinc Limited (HZL), is engaged in lead and zinc exploitation in Rampura-Agucha (district Bilwara), Rajpura-Dariba (district Rajasamand) & Zawar (district Udaipur) areas of Rajasthan. HZL has an ongoing capacity expansiion project at the Rampura Agucha mine from existing 2.4 million tonne of lead-zine ore production per annum to 3.75 million tonne per annum at a cost of Rs. 385 crore and expansion of zinc smelter at Chanderiya at a cost of Rs. 625 crore along with setting up of 154 MW Captive Power Plant at a cost of Rs. 540 crore with a total estimated, investment of Rs. 1550 crore.

A proposal of Neyveli Lignite Corporation Limited (NLC) for establishing an opencast lignite mine of 2.1 million tonnes per annum capacity and lignite based power projects of 2 x 120 MW capacity in Rajasthan is under advanced stage of consideration by Government of India for approval. The total cost of the mining project will be Rs. 253.44 crore and that of Thermal Power Station will be Rs. 1113.45 crore. Power Purchase Agreement has already been signed between NLC and Rajasthan Rajya Vidut Prasaran Nigam (RPVN)/Distribution and Supply Co. (DISCOM).

As per the information received from the State Government of Rajasthan, M/s RSMML, a Government of Rajasthan undertaking is currently engaged in new mining projects for mineral lignite in Nagaur and Bikaner districts.

In Punjab, primarily the mining of sand and to some extent of gravel-boulder are carried out presently. As per the information received from Government of Punjab, Government of Punjab has requested the Government of India for including the State of Punjab in the forthcoming New Exploration Licensing Policy of Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

(c) During the last three field seasons the Geological Survey of India, a subordinate office of Department of Mines, has undertaken 69 items of Regional Mineral Surveys in different parts of Rajasthan. As a result of these investigations, about 2.348 million tonnes of gold ore with average grade of 1 gm/tonne of 3.05 gm/tonne in Udaipur, Banswara & Dausa districts of Rajasthan, provisional reserve of 5 million tonnes of copper ore in sikar district and total of 44.06 million tonnes of lignite in Barmer district of Rajasthan have been estimated by Geological Survey of India during the last 3 years.

Mineral Exploration Corporation Ltd., a PSU of Department of Mines has recently on behalf of Department of Mines carried out exploration at Bhagal for copper and at Oevtalai for copper and gold in the State of Rajasthan at an estimated cost of Rs. 104.81 lakh and Rs. 87.03 lakh respectively. In addition, Mineral Exploration Corporation Ltd. is also carrying out exploration work funded by Department of Coal in the districts of Barmer and Bikaner of Rajasthan for locating new lignite deposits. A new lignite deposit of about 200 million tonnes has been located near Riri village in the district of Bikaner of Rajasthan.

As per information received from the State Government of Rajasthan, Department of Mines & Geology, Rajasthan as part of its ongoing survey and exploration programme, has taken up 64 projects under 9 exploration programmes during the year 2003-04. As a result, cement grade limestone deposits in Chittorgarh, Jhunjhunu and Jaisalmer districts were explored and additional lignite reserves were "proved" in Bikaner district. In addition to this, industrial glass and ceramic, dimensional and decorative stones were also expored in different parts of the state. During the year 2004-05,61 investigation projects under 9 exploration programmes have been taken up and work is under progress.

Statement

List of Metallic and Non-Metallic Minerals

[Part-C of the first schedule of Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957]

1. Asbestos
2. Bauxite
3. Chrome ore
4. Copper Ore
5. Gold
6. Irone ore
7. Lead
8. Manganese ore
9. Precious Stones
10. Zinc.

Delay in appointment of J.T.Os.

†*351. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the employees declared successful in departmental examination for the posts of Junior Telecom Officers in the Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd., Delhi and Mumbai after 1998 have yet not been appointed to those posts;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.